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### **Economic Census**

The Economic Census provides a detailed portrait of the nation's economy every 5 years, from the national to the local level.

The 1997 Economic Census covers nearly all of the U.S. economy in its basic collection of establishment statistics. There are several related programs, including statistics on minority and women-owned businesses. Censuses on agriculture and government are conducted at the same time.

Economic Census data is published, industry-by-industry and area-by-area in well over a thousand reports, primarily during 1999 and 2000. Statistics are published primarily in terms of establishments. An establishment is a business or industrial unit at a single location that produces or distributes goods or performs services. The Economic Census classifies establishments according to the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). In 1997, NAICS codes replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes used in previous censuses. NAICS classifies industries using 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, and 6- digit levels of detail. Sectors, the broadest classifications, are 2-digit codes, while individual industries are represented at the 6-digit code level.

In addition to industries, products in the manufacturing and mining industries are classified consistent with the NAICS structure. The first 6 digits of the 10-digit product code are normally the same as the NAICS code for the industry with which the product is most often associated. Broad product or service lines also are provided for retail and wholesale trade and other service industries.

The Economic Census classifies statistics on several levels of geography: nation, states, metropolitan areas, counties, places (those with 2500 or more inhabitants), and in the future, ZIP codes. The most detailed information is available for the United States as a whole. Statistics are sometimes withheld for geographic areas to avoid disclosing information about individual firms. Some sectors have more geographic detail than others.